



Quick Reads

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Smokefree Air Act update

Nearly three weeks after the Smokefree Air Act went into effect, staff in the IDPH Division of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control have received nearly 1,700 calls and e-mails from business owners and the public. The vast majority—about 90 percent—have been from people with questions about how to comply with the new law. As such, these figures reflect just how important education is in enforcing this new law. Most of the questions pertain to obtaining and posting no-smoking signs, IDPH's process for working with businesses following a complaint, and site-specific questions. Additionally, the Smokefree Air Act Web site has received an average of 3,600 hits per day since July 1.

IDPH has received fewer than 250 complaints. Each one requires follow-up by an IDPH staff member to verify the details of the complaint and determine whether it is valid. Nineteen verified complaints have resulted in staff sending a Notice of Possible Violation. These are not legal actions; rather, they inform the recipient that a complaint has been made and offer help in coming into compliance with the law. To learn more about the Smokefree Air Act and access resources such as signs and business-specific fact sheets, visit www.IowaSmokefreeAir.gov.

Invitation to join Rebuild Iowa task forces

Governor Chet Culver and Lt. Governor Patty Judge are inviting Iowans to apply for a position on one of the nine new Rebuild Iowa task forces, which will help create a vision for Iowa's recovery efforts. Last month, Governor Culver signed his seventh

executive order, which created the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission. Chaired by Gen. Ron Dardis of the Iowa National Guard, the 15-member commission is designed to help coordinate our state's recovery efforts. The Executive Order specifically calls for the creation of task forces to guide the commission's work. The nine task forces created are: Housing; Flood Plain Management and Hazard Mitigation; Infrastructure and Transportation; Economic and Workforce Development; Cultural Heritage and Records Retention; Public Health and Health Care; Long-Term Recovery Planning; Agriculture and Environment; and Education. For more information or to apply, visit <http://flood2008.iowa.gov>.

Flood response update

Last month, IDPH responded to requests for assistance in assessing public health and environmental health needs from several local public health agencies in areas affected by record flooding. Teams from Iowa, Florida and North Carolina were deployed to determine the health concerns of Iowans in these flooded areas. IDPH staff presented the results of those surveys to local agencies last week. Many of the findings were in relation to mental health and stress issues, especially the lack of professional resources in rural areas. Butler County, for example, has no mental health providers. Other issues identified included private well water quality and mold clean-up. IDPH will continue working with local agencies to address the needs of their residents.

IDPH/CDC Public Health Messaging survey

A survey conducted this month by IDPH and the CDC focused on the way health messages are received and how effective those messages are. Nearly 400 residents in flooded areas of Benton, Johnson, Linn and Louisa counties were asked about specific health messages related to flooding. While many people remembered hearing messages about vaccinations and mold, few said they remembered messages about avoiding injuries or carbon monoxide poisoning, which are the most common risks associated with flood recovery. IDPH will review these survey findings to determine how best to get important health messages to the intended audiences.

Mosquito populations expected to rise

Weeks of heavy rains and pooling water created the perfect habitat for mosquitoes to breed. Although mosquitoes that carry West Nile and other viruses tend to appear later in the summer, it's important to eliminate their habitats now. Iowans can avoid mosquito bites by:

- Applying CDC-approved insect repellents that contain DEET.
- Wearing protective clothing, such as long-sleeves, long pants, socks and shoes.

- Being aware of peak hours of mosquito activity: dusk and dawn.

Mosquito proof your home by:

- At least once or twice a week, empty water from flower pots, pet food and water dishes, bird baths, swimming pool covers, buckets, barrels, and cans.
- Check for clogged rain gutters and clean them out.
- Remove discarded tires, and other items that could collect water.
- Be sure to check for containers or trash in places that may be hard to see, such as under bushes or under your home.

We want your best practices

IDPH is committed to telling the citizens of Iowa about the good things public health is doing to make a difference. To do this, we want to highlight your best practices/success stories. Please send your ideas to Don McCormick at dmccormi@idph.state.ia.us.

*To everyone in public health and all our partners—keep up the great work!
Tom*